



NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

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WILLIAM R. STEWART, FORMER NLRB LAWYER, WINS PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

William R. Stewart, who retired recently as Chief Counsel to National Labor Relations Board Chairman William B. Gould IV, has been awarded the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service -- the highest honor the Federal Government can grant to a career civilian employee. He is the first individual with the National Labor Relations Board to receive the President's Award.

Fewer than five individuals each year win this prestigious award, which is presented "for the best achievements having current impact on improving government operations or serving the government interest," according to the Office of Personnel Management.

Mr. Stewart had a 40-year career of government service which included 34 years with the NLRB. In a March 18, 1997 letter, upon the occasion of Mr. Stewart's retirement, President Clinton said his contributions to the agency were "unparalleled."

In recommending Mr. Stewart for the award, Chairman Gould praised his "exceptional abilities" as a legal scholar, litigation expert, and manager. Pointing out that Mr. Stewart was the first black selected as a Chief Counsel in the history of the agency, Chairman Gould stated:

"Throughout his career, Mr. Stewart has served as a role model to lawyers and law students of all economic and social circumstances as well as those young people who may have begun in less advantaged circumstances. He has the rare ability to relate to people of all races and creeds on the enlightened basis that we share a common humanity. He sincerely believes that progress is dependent on hard work and making the most of individual talents, and on the ability to perceive and develop the talents of others. Mr. Stewart has throughout his managerial career assisted the agency in recruiting lawyers committed to his high standard excellence and performance. He has consistently insured that all have been given the opportunity to succeed. Mr. Stewart is known to be an outstanding teacher and has developed innumerable young attorneys into outstanding litigation experts."

Friends since they worked together as young staff attorneys on the staff of former Chairman Frank McCulloch in the early 1960s, Chairman Gould said further of Mr. Stewart

"He has never lost sight of our ultimate goal of providing workplace justice to the American people whom we serve. During these past 3 years of travail and challenge for the agency, Bill Stewart was its heart and soul and mind."

Mr. Stewart began his NLRB career in 1963 as a legal assistant on the staff of former Chairman McCulloch, after having been employed for four years as an attorney at the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1967, the rank-and-file employees of the Board and General Counsel selected him to be president of the NLRB Professional Association. He left the agency in 1968 for one year to be Manager, Labor Relations and Equal Opportunity, for Simmonds Precision Products, Inc., in Tarrytown, New York. Upon his return in 1969 to Chairman McCulloch's staff, Mr. Stewart was detailed to the Appellate Court Branch to help reduce its backlog of cases. In 1970, he was elected again to be president of the NLRB Professional Association.

In 1971, Mr. Stewart transferred to the Appellate Court Branch of the Division of Enforcement Litigation, Office of the General Counsel, and was promoted to a supervisory position in 1976. He was promoted again in 1978 to the position of Deputy Assistant General Counsel (Managing Supervisor), a position he held until being selected as Chairman Gould's Chief Counsel in 1994. In the course of his career, he received numerous commendation awards.

A native of Terre Haute, Indiana, Mr. Stewart was awarded a B.A. degree, majoring in government, from Indiana University in 1954. He graduated with high honors and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He worked 40 hours a week at the home of the university president during his freshman and sophomore years, and 32 hours a week at the home of a university department chairman during his junior and senior years.

During college, Mr. Stewart also took four years of Reserve Officer Training and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army upon graduating. He started law school at Indiana University in the fall of 1954 on a full scholarship, but was called to active duty in October 1955. After completing the Armor Officer Basic Course in February 1956 at Ft. Knox Kentucky, he was assigned to the 3rd Armored Division, which was transferred to Germany in May 1956. In January 1956, Mr. Stewart was selected to be the courts and boards officer and assistant adjutant of a combat command of over 5,000 men. After 18 months of active duty, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

In the fall of 1957, Mr. Stewart returned to Indiana University Law School and was granted a J.D. with distinction in 1959. During law school, he was invited to join the staff of the Law Journal and was selected to be a Note Editor. He also was elected to The Order of the Coif.